

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

A Message from the Secretary

May was **National Mental Health Month** and it also turned out to be a busy month on the news front for the Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA).

Oscar Morgan, who has been director of the Administration since 1997, has moved on to become the senior director of mental health policy for the National Mental Health Association.

Mr. Morgan's leadership proved invaluable to crafting improvements in the public mental health system (PMHS). He is a remarkable administrator, leader, colleague and friend. We will all miss him and wish him all the best in his new endeavor.

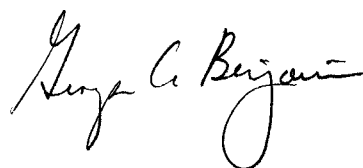
I am pleased to announce that Brian M. Hepburn, M.D. has been named acting director of the Administration. Dr. Hepburn, who joined DHMH in 1987, has been clinical director for MHA since 1996.

DHMH also unveiled changes to the PMHS last month. These modifications are a result of the fiscal 2003 budget bill passed by the Maryland General Assembly that requires us to align expenditures with budgeted resources.

The primary difference will be a shift in provider compensation from a fee-for-service system to one that is grant-based, for some services provided to Medicaid-ineligible consumers. This change will occur over the next several months and will result in financial stability for the program, as well as yield cost savings for the providers. No change was proposed for the Medicaid component of the system.

The reconfiguration of the PMHS was done with the assistance of a workgroup, comprised of providers and consumer advocates. The workgroup reviewed the issues and made recommendations to design a system that met the specifications of the budget bill. MHA is moving forward with some of the recommendations, while others will require further study due to cost implications for the State.

The PMHS has experienced a number of fiscal pressures similar to those in other states. Our priority will continue to be fiscal responsibility while maintaining continuity of care for our consumers.



O'Connor Building Air Quality

Several steps have been taken by the Department of General Services (DGS) to address concerns regarding the air quality in the O'Connor Building.

The building's systems have had a thorough top-to-bottom review. This analysis included inspecting and checking the air handling units, variable air volume boxes, fire dampers and coils. Repairs and cleaning of all these components have been performed as appropriate. In addition, 728 ceiling tiles in the building have been replaced.

No basis has been found to conclude that the building is unsafe for continued occupancy.

A Certified Industrial Hygienist, hired to inspect the two air handling units on the penthouse level, found evidence of water damage to portions of the fiberglass insulation of the main section of the air handling units and the supply air ducts. This insulation was replaced.

Tests that were conducted on fiberglass samples and two 'swipe' samples showed no evidence that the levels of contaminants in the building's air supply system were sufficient to adversely affect healthy individuals.

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Air Quality *Continued*

DGS will continue to monitor the air handling system, and has instituted preventive maintenance and cleaning procedures. These steps should serve to address air quality concerns for the future.

Fowler is Appointed Chief Medical Examiner



Dr. David R. Fowler has been named Chief Medical Examiner for

the State of Maryland by the Post Mortem Examiners Commission. Dr. Fowler had been acting Chief Medical Examiner since May of last year, when Dr. John E. Smialek, his predecessor, passed away.

Dr. Fowler heads the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) located in Baltimore. The office employs 75 full time and 120 part time employees and has a budget of \$6.2 million.

"Maryland has one of the leading medical examiner systems in the United States," said Dr. Fowler. "My goal is to maintain that reputation and help the office evolve to meet the new challenges that face our community in today's world."

The OCME investigates human deaths caused by violence, suicide, or casualty; sudden death in an apparently healthy

individual; and deaths that involve any suspicious or unusual manners.

Staff of the OCME works closely with law enforcement agencies, and are often called to testify before Grand Juries or in criminal cases.

Dr. Fowler, who is a naturalized citizen of the United States, was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in 1958. He has been with OCME since 1993 when he joined the staff as a Fellow. Prior to his appointment as acting chief, he was Deputy Chief Medical Examiner for Statewide Services and Deputy Chief for Autopsy Services.

Dr. Fowler is board certified in anatomic and forensic pathology by the American Board of Pathology, and received his medical degree and a Degree of Master of Medicine in Forensic Pathology from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. He lives in Baltimore County with his wife Carolyn and their children Matthew and Kaitlyn.

Report Dead Birds on the Internet

People who find birds they believe may have died from West Nile virus can now use the Internet to file the report. The address is <http://edcp.org/wn/html/wndeaddbird.cfm>. This is just one of several refinements the State has made to its WNV plan, which was developed by DHMH, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources.

The plan, which reflects what has been learned about the disease

over the past three years, calls for a cutback in bird testing. Beginning this year, after two WNV-positive birds have been found in any given zip code, no additional birds reported from that zip code will be picked up or tested. The State will continue to take reports of dead birds in all zip codes, and will use this information for public health planning purposes.

For those who do not have access to the Internet, or wish to report a dead bird by phone, the West Nile segment of the Maryland Public Health Hot Topics Line will continue to take reports. Operators will be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to take reports. The toll-free phone number is 1-866-866-2769 (CROW).

The hotline also will have recorded information about pesticide control and WNV-related prevention measures.

Again this year, Maryland will monitor illnesses in people that may be related to insecticide spraying used to control the mosquito population. The State received no reports last year that connected human illness to pesticide control.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture will conduct insecticide spraying to control the spread of West Nile virus only when requested by local health officials.

In addition to these steps, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will again collect blood samples later in the summer from different species of birds across the state to determine if they have been exposed to the virus.

Performance Excellence Awards Ceremony

The **DHMH 2002 Performance Excellence Awards** ceremony will be held on Friday, June 21, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the O'Connor Building Lobby at 201 W. Preston Street in Baltimore.

Awards will be given to more than 65 DHMH individuals and teams for exemplary achievement in going "above and beyond" to produce notable results. Awards will be given for customer satisfaction, innovation, leadership, and improvement.

Planned speakers include Secretary Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, and a representative from the Governor's office. In addition, Craig Valentine, the acclaimed 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking, will talk on *"The Way of the Champions"*.

Employees are allowed two hours of leave time, with their supervisors approval, to attend this event. Join in celebrating and recognizing the achievement of performance excellence in DHMH.

Are You Interested in eGovernment?

Now that most Maryland workplaces and many households are connected to the Internet, the State is aggressively promoting eGovernment, an initiative that will allow our customers to obtain information and conduct many business functions on-line. The Maryland eGovernment Initiative is a multi-year project that establishes a time line for every State Agency to transition government services and information to a Web or other electronic environment.

The goals are for 50 percent of DHMH's information and services to be on the Web or other electronic environment by the end of 2002, 65 percent by the end of 2003, and 80 percent by the end of 2004.

To help DHMH staff understand the eGovernment initiative and other exciting aspects of the World Wide Web environment, the Information Resources Management Administration hosts eGovernment workgroup meetings.

Each meeting includes updates on several 'hot topics' the group is following, plus demonstrations of important Web sites or state-of-the-art software products. Some recent presentations include the State Portal, www.Maryland.gov; Board of Nursing — Online Renewal Processing — RN & LPN; and Content Management.

The eGovernment workgroup meetings are open to the public. For more information on dates and times, please call Lisa Price at 410-767-0960 or by email at lprice@dhmh.state.md.us.

Congratulations to . . .

Patricia Barnett, Dianna Davis, Delaine Deardorff-Beck, Brian Flynn, Matt Helwig, Larry Leitch, Doug McFarland, Debbie Middleton, Ed Singer, and Amy Stanton, all employees of the **Carroll County Health Department**, who attended the Industrial Hazardous Materials Technician level training sponsored by the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute of the University of Maryland.

This 40-hour course was given at the Carroll County Fire Training Center from April 29-May 3. The employees underwent the full range of hazmat response training up to and including training in totally encapsulated Level "A" suits with self-contained breathing apparatuses. Carroll County is in the process of developing its own hazmat response unit.

In the wake of last fall's terrorist attacks, Larry Leitch, the Carroll County Health Officer, wanted his agency to be prepared to assist and support the unit to deal with bio-type threats. Since any infectious material or communicable patient could be considered a hazmat scene, these 10 employees are now fully trained to take an active role in protecting the citizens of Carroll County from bioterrorism or any type of bio-threat.



News In Brief

Matuszak Honored — Dr. Diane Matuszak, director of the Community Health Administration, received a “Woman of Distinction” award from Soroptimist International of Howard County for outstanding achievement in the field of health. Before returning to headquarters in December, Dr. Matuszak was Health Officer for Howard County.

Brechner Receives Award — Dr. Ross Brechner, Director of the Biological Agents Registry Program, was honored with the Philip S. Brachman Award from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officers Class of 2000. This award is given to those who have demonstrated excellence in teaching epidemiology to EIS officers. Dr. Brechner was cited for his work mentoring Maryland EIS investigations of increasing aseptic meningitis, botulism, and anthrax that occurred in the greater Washington, D.C. region.

EIS Officer — While on the EIS officer topic, an early welcome to Dr. Peter Thomas, who will be working with Dr. David Blythe, Acting State Epidemiologist, in the DHMH Epidemiology and Disease Control Program. Dr. Thomas, who has a Ph.D. in Epidemiology, will be joining the Department for two years beginning in August after undergoing a month of specialized training at CDC. He will concentrate on working with infectious diseases and outbreaks.

Red Ribbon Question Mark Campaign — “Thank You Mom”, the latest phase of the AIDS Administration’s Red Ribbon Question Mark Campaign, debuted on Friday, May 10. Timed to coincide with Mother’s Day, the campaign is designed to raise awareness among pregnant women that early HIV testing, and treatment if necessary, can lead to healthy babies. “Thank You Mom” will use radio advertising, bus posters, and community events to help prevent mother-to-baby transmission of HIV by encouraging women of childbearing age to be tested and if necessary, treated for HIV.



The O’Conor Building was full of children when parents took advantage of the annual ‘Bring Your Daughter to Work Day.’ Here, Clair Blair, of Payroll Services, explains some of her duties to her daughter Stephanie.

Shadow Day — Seven ninth and tenth graders from Overlea and Landsdowne High Schools visited DHMH on April 11 to ‘shadow’ DHMH employees working in finance through a day of work. The students, all interested in a career in finance, were mentored by Hank Fitzer, Darrell Harris, Michelle McDonald, Kyle McNair, Audrey Richardson and James Williams. The day began with Richard Proctor, chief of staff to Dr. Benjamin, welcoming and presenting an overview of the Department to the students. Lisa Ellis, from Operations, and Charles Fleming, from the Office of the Secretary, coordinated the event.

Training Services Division — A catalog of courses held by the Training Services Division July through December is available on the Web at www.dhmh.state.md.us/tsd/tsdweb.htm. The catalog contains registration instructions, a registration form, an ‘at-a-glance’ program schedule, and directions to all of the training locations. Additional information is available by phone at 410-767-5700.

Osteoporosis — Governor Parris N. Glendening signed legislation that creates a Maryland Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Task Force. This task force will track the incidence of osteoporosis in the State, conduct a needs assessment, and report findings and recommendations annually to the Governor and General Assembly. A recent DHMH report, *Osteoporosis in Maryland: A Survey of Prevention and Diagnostic Services*, shows that almost two-thirds of the health care facilities surveyed in Maryland were not offering osteoporosis programs. The task force is expected to look for the most effective ways to deliver osteoporosis prevention and intervention messages to public and health care professionals.

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News In Brief *Continued*

Dream Catcher's Day —

For the third year in a row, the Mental Hygiene Administration collaborated with Port-Discovery to kick off Mental Health Month. More than 500 people turned out for the May 4 event, which featured vendors, refreshments and entertainment. Dream Catcher's is a Port Discovery program that helps at-risk youth with their career goals.

Tai Yim Kung Fu Lion Dancers perform at Dream Catcher's Day.



Performance Excellence Council Meeting Dates —

The schedule of meetings for the rest of 2002 for the DHMH Performance Excellence Council is as follows: Friday, July 26; Friday, September 27; and Friday, November 22. All meetings will be held in the O'Connor Building Lobby Conference Room L-1, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meetings are open to DHMH employees who receive their supervisor's approval to attend. Come find out the latest that's happening in the Department regarding achieving and maintaining performance excellence.

Eating Disorders Affect Young Women

The body-baring fashions of summer are here, and they may be revealing more than thin thighs and toned tummies. Some of those slender young women sporting shorts, tank tops and bikinis are suffering from eating disorders.

The most common eating disorders — anorexia, bulimia and binge eating — are all on the rise in the United States. Over 90 percent of those affected are adolescent girls and young adult women. Often, those with eating disorders have an unrealistic view of their bodies and an obsessive fear of body fat and weight gain. They may feel 'fat' even though they are at a normal weight or even underweight.

People with anorexia adopt dangerous eating habits in order to stay thin. They may eat only tiny amounts of food; fast for long periods of time; or use

laxatives, diuretics or enemas to avoid weight gain. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that one in 10 cases of anorexia ends in death from starvation, suicide, or medical complications like heart attack or kidney failure.

Bulimia is another common eating disorder, characterized by episodes of extreme over-eating. This is followed by purging the food through self-induced vomiting, or compensating for overeating through misuse of laxatives, diet pills or excessive exercise. Since bingeing and purging are done in secret, friends and family members are often unaware of the illness.

Binge eating disorder (BED) is the newest clinically-recognized eating disorder. BED is characterized by repeated episodes of uncontrolled eating. Binge-eaters consume large amounts of food in one sitting and don't stop eating — often in secret to

avoid embarrassment — until they feel uncomfortably full. Unlike bulimia, binge eating is not followed by purging. The illness often develops after significant weight loss from dieting. Untreated, binge eating disorder can result in obesity.

Eating disorders can have many causes. Certain personality traits are associated with eating disorders, like low self-esteem and perfectionism. Eating disorders appear to run in families, especially in families with a history of substance abuse and depression. People who have experienced physical or sexual abuse are also more likely to develop an eating disorder.

The disorders are treatable, but it is important to diagnose them early. Prompt treatment can prevent serious and life-long health problems. Treatment usually includes a combination of counseling, nutritional

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Eating Disorders

Continued

therapy, medication, and sometimes, hospitalization.

The following behaviors may be signs of an eating disorder, especially in teen and pre-teen girls:

- Eating only foods very low in calories and fat, such as vegetables;
- Odd eating rituals, such as cutting food into very small pieces;
- Playing with food but not really eating it;
- Taking repeated trips to the bathroom, especially after eating;
- Exercising several times a day;
- Increased isolation from family and friends; and
- Preparing elaborate meals for family and friends but not joining them to eat.

For more information on eating disorders, contact the National Eating Disorders Association, 603 Stewart Street, Suite 803, Seattle, WA 98101 or by phone at 1-800-931-2237. Additional information is available on the NEDA Web site at www.nationaleatingdisorders.org.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Tara Snyder, Community Health Educator in the Center of Health Promotion, Education and Tobacco Prevention, for writing this article.

Stroke Sense

You may know someone who has had a stroke, maybe a grandmother or elderly neighbor. About 60,000 people in Maryland are living with the disabling effects of stroke.

But did you know that stroke is not just an event affecting the elderly?

Almost a third of all stroke victims in Maryland are people under age 65. Strokes that occur in younger people can cause disability in the prime of life. African-Americans are more likely to have high blood pressure, the major risk factor for stroke. And, African-Americans, especially African-American men, have a greater chance of developing a stroke than the general population.

What can you do to lower your risk of stroke? Quit smoking today, which will also reduce your risk of developing heart and lung disease. Get your blood pressure checked, and if it is high, get treatment. Eat a healthy diet and be physically active. The last two recommendations help prevent stroke by controlling blood sugar, pressure, cholesterol, and weight. Over one-half of all Marylanders are overweight or obese, a problem that will impact stroke and heart disease rates in the years to come.

For greater stroke prevention, focus on your children's health habits. They are learning from your example every day. Show them how important it is to be active, to choose foods wisely, to get blood pressure checked and keep it controlled. In this way,

the next generation of Marylanders can live healthy, longer lives.

There is no better time than now to check your own risk factors for stroke. Learn the early warning signs, since early treatment is the best way to avoid the disabling effects of stroke.

For information on stroke and its major risk factor, high blood pressure, visit "Your Guide to Lowering High Blood Pressure" at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/index.html and the American Stroke Association at www.strokeassociation.org.

Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.



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